

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Honorable David J. Jordan

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Council Priorities

1. Substance abuse prevention

Create a coordinated strategy to prevent substance abuse for children and adolescents. Create a coordinated strategy to prevent substance abuse among pregnant women. Lower the amount of women giving birth who are substance abusers. Form a Task Force of providers/organizations within the county currently providing prevention based programs for better coordination and to avoid duplication.

2. At-risk children

Promote academic and behavioral intervention programs for all at risk students. Continue implementation of the At-Risk Criteria for children in partnership with the utilization of the multi-disciplinary/multi need forum. Advocate effectively for appropriate referrals and services which eliminate gaps in services that prevent duplication.

3. Child safety

Work toward creating a safe environment where children can live free of abuse, neglect, crime and drugs.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Secure constant funding for Kid One transport communicating Early Childhood Care and Education Program information to the community

Action Steps

- 1) Updating existing directory information.
- 2) Distributing directories to parents.
- 3) Information service providers of techniques to refer families for services.

Affordable quality childcare

Action Steps

- 1) Evaluate childcare waiting.
- 2) Create environment for supporting NEW service providers with focus on faith-based community.
- 3) Promote early brain development and child development information for childcare providers and families they serve.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Workforce development

Action Steps

- 1) Increase education level to the state average.
- 2) Survey of current education/skills needed by employees.
- 3) Escambia CPC to sponsor/promote a career fair.

Resource information

Action Steps

- 1) Centralized Coordination of local resources to be made available to the public.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Drop out rate

Action Steps

- 1) Expanded academic intervention program for regular education students.
- 2) Suspension/Community service grants.
- 3) Peer Mentors.

Academic/behavioral intervention programs for special education students

Action Steps

- 1) Extended day/year programs.
- 2) After school programs.
- 3) Intervention programs counseling.
- 4) Peer Mentors.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Substance abuse prevention

Action Steps

- 1) Create a coordinated strategy to reduce/prevent substance abuse among pregnant women. Work among multi agencies to develop a strategy to reduce the amount of babies born to substance abuse mothers.
- 2) Create a coordinated strategy to prevent substance abuse for children and adolescents. (This will also help decrease the infant mortality as well as a vast assortment of social, health, economic and educational problems).
- 3) Form a Task Force of providers/organizations within the county.
- 4) Assure that all prevention programs are scientifically based.
- 5) Continue the Substance Abuse program for teens at the Compass School in Atmore.

Infant mortality rate

Action Steps

- 1) Work to reestablish the Fetal Infant Mortality Review Program (FIMRP) for Escambia County.
- 2) Continue to include the importance of early prenatal care in Family Education classes in schools and churches.
- 3) Work to assure that all pregnancies are insured.
- 4) Continue to decrease teen pregnancies.
- 5) Continue to promote "Back to Sleep Program."
- 6) Promote programs to reduce prematurely including programs to decrease drug use in pregnant women.
- 7) Continue early interventions in infections during pregnancy.
- 8) Recommend vitamins (especially folic acid) at puberty.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Parent referral process from the court system and community partners (parent education)

Action Steps

- 1) Design referral system for parenting classes in Escambia County.
- 2) Follow status monitoring system.
- 3) Feedback loop to referring agency.

Involve faith-based community as parenting partner

Action Steps

- 1) Provide community awareness of parenting issues and services by reaching out and visiting the faith-based community.
- 2) Engage with faith-based communities to provide parenting sessions in their church once a year.
- 3) Include faith-based representatives in CPC committees.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

At risk children

Action Steps

- 1) Establish criteria for at-risk children through Children Policy Council.
- 2) Coordination and collaboration between community partners to identify at-risk children.
- 3) Utilization of a multi-disciplinary/multi-need forum to advocate for appropriate referrals and services to eliminate gaps in service and prevent duplication.
- 4) Family assessment to be completed on all children and their family prior to court action, i.e. delinquency, dependency, and children in need of supervision.
- 5) Assist and support the development and funding of the Child Advocacy Center for prevention, treatment, and education.
- 6) Establish protocol for determining parental responsibility and consequence for lack of family involvement.

Juvenile violence and crime

Action Steps

- 1) Identify at-risk children from community partners.
- 2) Gather statistical information from Drug Task Force, local law enforcement agencies, schools, DHR, other community partners to identify children who are at-risk; i.e. child abuse and/or neglect, substance abuse, family violence, teen pregnancy, STD's, truancy, peer violence (school/community) including threats of violence.
- 3) Family assessment to be completed on all children and family involved prior to court action including delinquency, dependency, and children in need of supervision.
- 4) Identify other court interventions and prevention's. I.e. CASA or Big Brother/Big Sister, informal adjustments, community service, mentoring programs.

Policy Recommendations

- Better funding for all prenatal programs.
- Better access to state vital statistics for analysis of fetal-infant deaths.
- More funding is needed for county organizations to conduct programs that will help to correct programs reflecting higher than the state averages such as infant mortality rates.
- Lack of availability of vital statistics data impedes continuation Fetal Infant Mortality Program even when local resources are obtainable.
- Obtain funding for substance abuse prevention programs.